

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

The Story of Opus Dei's Ruud Lubbers: the UNHCR High Commissioner

by Voltaire Network

On January 1, 2001, the Dutchman **Ruud Lubbers** succeeded Japan's Sadako Okata to head of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). His nomination was proposed on October 25, 2000 by UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, and later ratified by the New York-headquartered General Assembly. All of this was no surprise however. Various candidates were proposed for the position - among them Bernard Kouchner, whose candidacy was supported by the French government. France, in turn, promised that if Kouchner were selected, that nation's financial contribution to the UNHCR would be voluntarily increased.

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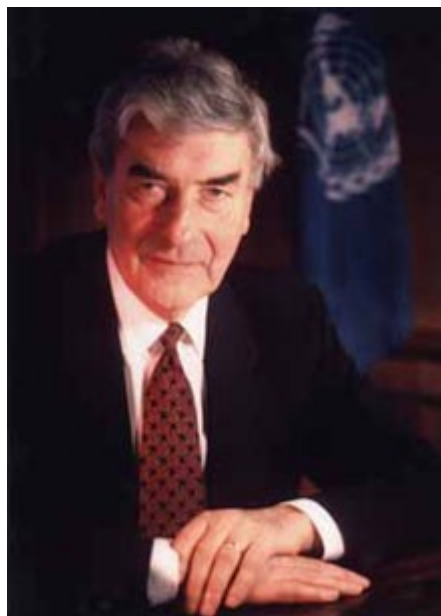
As for Holland, which had its own candidate in the person of the Dutch Minister of the Environment Jan Pronk, confirmed that **Ruud Lubbers** was not its man. The lack of transparency in Kofi Annan's making of the decision unleashed intense protest, both on the part of governments and humanitarian associations. Speaking to incredulous journalists, **Ruud Lubbers**-who was not the official candidate for the position-commented on his nomination stating, «*It is a great surprise, I don't know how Kofi Annan came up with me.*»

According to journalistic investigation released by a French association advocating greater freedom of expression in civil society, **Opus Dei** directed the effort and used its pressured over the preceding months to win this strategic position, one that would allow **Lubbers** to help strengthen charitable Catholic organizations. **Ruud Lubbers**, the former prime minister of the Netherlands (Holland), is a Christian-Democratic multi-millionaire, very well-known for his attacks and condemnations against all forms of government and the welfare state. **Lubbers** was expecting to receive his reward: on two occasions he accepted to serve as the bait to allow **Opus Dei** to place its people in key positions.

In 1994 he participated in the plot to remove Willy Claes from the General Secretariat of NATO, and he negotiated with Lord Carington concerning a new re-definition of Atlantic bonds and interests in the face of the secret Bilderberg Group. He stepped aside, at the last moment, opening the way to Spanish Minister Javier Solana. In 1995, he was predicted to be Jacques Delor's successor to the presidency of the European Commission, again stepping aside at the last moment, an act which favored the lackluster Jacques Santer.

Rudd **Lubbers** was born May 7, 1939 in Rotterdam. An economist, he first worked in Holland in a company of the BTP. Since 1971 **Lubbers** has participated in activities of the Club of Rome, advocating the voluntary limitation of growth. In 1973 he became the Christian-Democratic Minister of the Economy. Confronted with the oil crisis, he encouraged the nation to search for new energy alternatives.

In 1982 he became the prime minister, a position that he would occupy for twelve consecutive years. In 1989 he signed the Hague Declaration, along with Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundlandt (the current general director of the World Health Organization, who he met in the Club of Rome). That would later give rise to the call for the United Nation's Rio Summit. In Dublin's European Council, **Lubbers** proposed widening the European Union into a European Community of Energy, copying the model of Jean Monnet which based the EEC (European Economic Community) on the CECA. In 1994 he abandoned his political functions and devoted himself to teaching at the Catholic University of Tilburg, where he directed the Institute for Globalization and Development. He also taught at Harvard University, where he was a guest professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute of Government.



Rudd Lubbers

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Always active in the Club of Rome, Rudd **Lubbers** directs a study program dedicated to "Governance in the Era of Globalization." He is member of the Earth Council, a NGO in which are also associated the former president of the Rio Summit and the Red Cruz, promoting theories of sustainable development. He is vice-president of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans (IWCO) created as a continuation of the World Year of the Oceans (1998) and presided over by Elisabeth Mann Borgese, and later on by Mario Soares (two other members of the Club of Rome).

Professor **Lubbers** developed a program on global ethics under the auspices of UNESCO (whose director, Federico Mayor, was a member of both **Opus Dei** and the Club of Rome at the same time). **Lubbers** is also a member of the Jacques Delors Foundation (another member of the Club of Rome), and of Our Europe. In 1999 he was elected president of the WWF. He is a member of Moral Rearmament, the Caux Round Table, the New Atlantic Initiative, and other others.

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